

October 1, 2003

Public Notice for 401 Certification

Janes Creek at West End Court and Q Street Project Humboldt County

On August 11, 2003 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Juli Neander, on behalf of the City of Arcata, requesting approval for disturbances to waters of the State and other water quality impacts associated with the development of the proposed project.

The Project is located within the City of Arcata (City) in Humboldt County, along two separate reaches of Janes Creek. The stated purpose of the Project is to “reduce upstream flooding and improve creek and riparian habitat . . .” Along the first reach (at West End Court), the City proposes to remove two 120 foot side-by-side culverts and replace them with a 50 foot long by 14 foot wide steel bridge (clear-span). Along the second reach (at 17th and Q Street), the City proposes to install three rock/log fish habitat structures, erect livestock exclusion fencing, plant riparian species, install a small pedestrian bridge, and enlarge a wetland area so that it acts as a high-flow flood plain/wetland terrace.

To construct the steel bridge the City proposes to remove 800 to 1,000 yards of fill material. The banks will be contoured and sloped to a 3:1 grade, filter-fabric will be installed under the bridge area, and the pre-cast abutments will be placed four feet above the bank-full water surface level. To prevent turbidity during construction, coffer dams will be placed upstream and downstream of the Project area; during the late summer season stream flows are extremely low, so diverting water around the site will not be needed. Any fish left in the work site after the dams are put in place will be moved downstream.

The existing wetland to be modified is near the corner of Q Street and 17th Street. The City proposes to modify the size, depth, and slope of the wetland so that it will act as a flood control detention area as well as a wetland. To accomplish this, the City proposes to grade the wetland area into a large terrace (0.48 acre) which slopes gradually toward the creek. The contours will be designed so that creek water will begin flowing into the terrace when the creek is at an elevation of 7.5 feet. The contouring will also be designed to gradually release water, rather than provide a pond, in order to prevent fish from being trapped.

The City proposes to install a log/boulder structure just downstream of the wetland basin and a rock cluster will be installed farther downstream. The work area for both of the instream structures will be isolated with temporary dams. A pedestrian bridge will also be installed on the top-of-bank (and therefore will not require excavation within the banks). When all of the instream work is complete, the City proposes to remove an existing fence (which is less than 10 feet from the bank) and replace it with a new 6 foot tall fence, that will be placed 25 feet out from the existing fence location. The entire area will be planted with 300 native trees as part of the proposed Project.

According to documents submitted with the application, the City has applied for permits from the United States Army Corps of Engineers as well as the Department of Fish and Game. The final disposition of CEQA is not known at this time, however a copy of the Initial Study was included with the application.

At this time the Regional Water Board is in the process of reviewing the proposed project regarding the issuance of the 401 Certification Permit. As part of this process, the Regional Water Board will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Lauren Hocker by email at hockl@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov, or send comments to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

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